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ARTS OF ASIA AT THE TIME OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE



FREER GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D. C. 1976

ARTS OF ASIA AT THE TIME OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

BICENTENNIAL EXHIBITION



FREER GALLERY OF ART
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

1975-1976

Library of Congress Catalog No. 75-42866

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY MUSEUM PRESS, INC., WASHINGTON, D.C.

Cover: Detail from Mynah Birds in a Plum Tree (acc.
No. 67.18), by Yōsa Buson (1716-1784). Dated
1776.

FOREWORD

All Americans take special pride in observing the two-hundredth anniversary of the United States. As we look back over the formative years of our young nation, we are keenly aware of the important influences and contributions of the peoples and cultures of Asia. From our initial contacts with the Orient, we Americans have been curious about their ancient cultures, which are so different from our own. As we learned more about their varied forms of artistic expression, the styles and motives of those cultures began to influence those of American artists.

As its contribution to the bicentennial celebration, the Freer Gallery of Art has assembled, from its own collections, an exhibition entitled, *Arts of Asia at the Time of American Independence*. It is our hope that those objects included in the exhibition will provide further insight into the civilizations of the Far East, the Near East and India during the period of the American Revolution.

Harold P. Stern
Director

FREER GALLERY OF ART
December, 1975

ARTS OF THE CH'ING DYNASTY (1644-1911)

The single most pervasive influence on Chinese art during the 18th century was that exerted by the Ch'ien-lung Emperor (reigned 1736-1795). Even before he ascended the throne to begin his sixty-year reign, Ch'ien-lung was fascinated by every aspect of the arts. As Emperor of China, unhampered by any restrictions in satisfying his antiquarian interests, he succeeded in amassing what was certainly the greatest imperial art collection in Chinese history.

Catalogues of the imperial collections of calligraphy, paintings and bronzes provide a detailed record of China's unique artistic heritage. Although no precise records were compiled of the minor arts assembled in the palaces at Peking, Mukden and Jehol, the quantity and quality of ceramics, jades, lacquers and textiles were unparalleled.

As arbiter and follower of taste, the Ch'ien-lung Emperor enjoyed and patronized those arts that emphasized technical virtuosity and stressed the continuity of tradition. Consequently, the imperial collections were extremely rich in examples of the calligraphy and paintings of the greatest masters of antiquity, as well as in those works by orthodox artists of the early Ch'ing dynasty. Almost completely unrepresented were the avant-garde, eccentric artists who did not enjoy official patronage. Similarly, the extraordinary products of the imperial workshops were unsullied by examples from local kilns or foundries.

Full appreciation of the Ch'ien-lung Emperor's refined taste, at times pursued to the point of preciosity, is possible only when viewed in the context of thousands of years of Chinese artistic tradition. Few Westerners in the 18th and 19th centuries had access to those objects made for imperial use. Even fewer were able to completely understand them. Twentieth-century scholarship and the accessibility of objects from the fabled Ch'ing dynasty collections provide Westerners with new insights into the achievements of Chinese culture during those years when Americans were striving to achieve their independence.



PLUM BLOSSOMS

16.539

By the Ch'ien-lung Emperor, dated 1746

Ink on paper

Height: 32.2 cm. (12¾ in.); width: 12.3 cm. (4⅞ in.)

The significance of this sketch of plum blossoms from the hand of the Ch'ien-lung Emperor lies in its role as a "pictorial colophon" on an important Sung dynasty painting which was acquired for the imperial collection in 1746. From the existing colophons at the end of the painting and those at the end of three other handscrolls in his collection, the Emperor realized for the first time that he had reunited four famous paintings which once belonged to a noted 16th century collector. Ch'ien-lung was so delighted that he painted a sketch of plum blossoms, of bamboo, of orchid, and of chrysanthemums, to be mounted at the end of the four handscrolls, in addition to writing numbers of colophons of the more orthodox kind. This was indicative of the importance the Emperor accorded these paintings, and reflects his growing sophistication in matters of traditional connoisseurship.

LANDSCAPE

16.539

By Ting Kuan-p'eng, active 1740-1760

Ink on paper

Height: 32.2 cm. (12¾ in.); width: 106.5 cm. (42 in.)

At the time the Ch'ien-lung Emperor painted his sketch of plum blossoms, he ordered Ting Kuan-p'eng, one of his court painters, to provide an appropriate painting as another "pictorial colophon" for the same scroll. Since the subject of the Sung dynasty handscroll is a "panoramic view of the Yangtze River in Szechwan," Ting Kuan-p'eng based his landscape on a poem about Szechwan by the celebrated T'ang dynasty poet Tu Fu (712-770). The complexity of this type of pictorial-literary allusion is a characteristic feature of later Chinese painting.



FAN PAINTING

75.15

By Ch'ien Wei-ch'eng (1720-1772)

Ink and color on paper

Height: 18.4 cm. (7¼ in.); width: 54 cm. (21¼ in.)



The landscape, basically tan and green in tonality, is constituted of many small individual units. That style of painting is derived from the early Ch'ing dynasty orthodox school. The painting is one of three component ornaments of the fan, the others being a poetic inscription written by Chi Huang (1711-1794) on the reverse, and the carving of Wang Yu-tun's (1692-1758) transcription of a 9th-century poem onto the fan covers. It is likely that this fan was once part of a set, illustrating ancient poems, which was prepared by court artisans for presentation to the Ch'ien-lung Emperor. The folding fan, a Japanese contribution to Chinese culture, was first imported by Koreans in the Sung dynasty (960-1279). The Chinese quickly appreciated the compactness of the folding fan as opposed to their own more bulky, nonfolding counterparts, and artists soon became intrigued by solving the compositional problems inherent in such a unique shape.

PLAYING WEI-CH'I IN PARADISE (detail)

11.188

Anonymous, 18th century

Ink and color on silk

Height: 29.6 cm. (11 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.); width: 100.2 cm. (39 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

On the willow tree at the end of the composition is a signature reading "Leng Ch'ien," on the basis of which the painting has been traditionally attributed to a 13th-century artist by that name. However, the brushwork and style of coloring support an 18th-century date of execution. The tradition of depicting imaginary realms and sumptuous palace complexes in a decorative style using opaque blue, green and gold pigments is usually associated with the T'ang dynasty painters Li Ssu-hsün and Li Chao-tao. This so-called "blue-and-green" style was eclipsed in the early Sung dynasty by a more descriptive, atmospheric technique that utilized transparent washes of color and/or monochrome ink, but it enjoyed a revival in the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties.



A SCENE FROM "THE ROMANCE OF THE
WESTERN CHAMBER"

16.517

Anonymous, 18th century

Ink and color on silk

Height: 198.5 cm. (78 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.); width: 130.6 cm. (51 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

The two lovers, who are secretly betrothed, gaze at each other while the faithful matchmaker stands apart watching them. The scene is from the Yüan dynasty play *Hsi-hsiang ch'i* ("The Romance of the Western Chamber") which is set in the T'ang dynasty. However, both the style and the content of the painting are typical of the first half of the 18th century. The painting was done by an academic artist, as evidenced by the painstaking depiction of detail as well as the technical virtuosity displayed in rendering the various textures of bamboo, lacquer, jade, bronze, porcelain and textile.



RIVER LANDSCAPE IN THE STYLE OF
CHAO MENG-FU

56.27

By Wang Chien (1598-1677), dated 1668

Ink and color on paper

Height: 135.5 cm. (53 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.); width: 62.5 cm. (24 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.)

Wang Chien was a painter of the "orthodox" school, as distinct from the academic school that emphasized technical proficiency and the individualist school which was less rooted in tradition. The inscription on the painting, with its claim to perpetuate traditions of hoary antiquity tempered by a self-deprecating humility, is typical of many found on such orthodox works:

I saw Chao Wen-min's (Chao Meng-fu, 1254-1322) painting, "White Clouds on the Hsiao and Hsiang Rivers." He truly imitates Pei-yüan (Tung Yüan, 10th century). Marvelously, there is a feeling of subtle, placid distances. By the rainy window I do his brush strokes, but truly I cannot achieve even a tiny resemblance.

Affixed to the painting are six seals of the Ch'ien-lung Emperor and two seals of the Chia-ch'ing Emperor (reigned 1796-1820).





AUTUMN MOUNTAINS IN COLOR IN THE STYLE OF NI TSAN

62.26

By Wang Yüan-ch'i (1642-1715), dated 1704

Ink and color on paper

Height: 95.5 cm. (37 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.); width: 50.5 cm. (19 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

This painting exemplifies the complexity of the stylistic lineage of works by orthodox artists of the early Ch'ing dynasty. In his inscription, Wang Yüan-ch'i implies that the painting is based on the style of the Yüan artist Ni Tsan (1301-1374) as filtered through that of Tung Ch'ich'ang (1555-1636) and of his own grandfather, Wang Shih-min (1592-1680). While the stylistic allusions are subtle, the painting is essentially conceived in terms of Wang Yüan-ch'i's own idiom.



RIVER LANDSCAPE IN THE STYLE OF HUANG KUNG-WANG

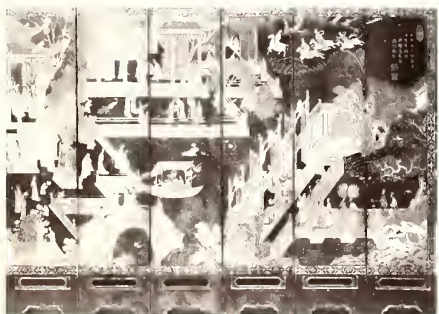
62.5

By Wang Yüan-ch'i (1642-1715), dated 1706

Ink and color on paper

Height: 97.7 cm. (38 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.); width: 59.2 cm. (23 $\frac{5}{16}$ in.)

Wang Yüan-ch'i was a leading exponent of what has been termed the orthodox school of Ch'ing dynasty painting. The essence of this school was the adherence to a theoretically defined lineage of past masters, particularly those of the 10th and 14th centuries. Transformations and synthesis of past styles were given precedence over technical dexterity. The K'ang-hsi Emperor (reigned 1662-1722), impressed by Wang Yüan-ch'i's work, commented that his "paintings should be kept to be shown to people," and this phrase was used by the artist in a seal, affixed at the right of the inscription.



LACQUER SCREEN (detail)

06.42

K'ang-hsi period, dated 1672

Height: 216.5 cm. (85 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.); width: 606.5 cm. (238 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

The inscription in the upper right corner of the first panel identifies the theme as "Spring Morning in the Palaces of Han" and provides the date corresponding to 1672. The tradition of depicting court ladies in elegant surroundings originated in the T'ang dynasty, and was a popular subject in the Ch'ing dynasty for paintings as well as for "Coromandel" screens. These screens are so called because they were exported to Europe via the Coromandel coast of India. The designs on early Coromandel screens were incised into the thin lacquer surface and the hollowed out areas were painted with bright pigments and some gilding.

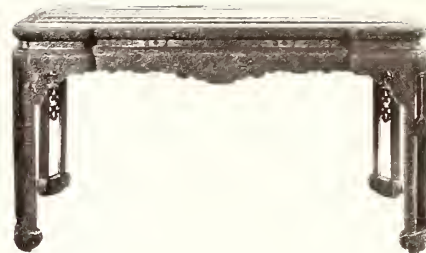
CARVED LACQUER TABLE

12.12

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Height: 84 cm. (33 in.); width: 66.8 cm. (26¼ in.)

Lacquer is the resin from the lacquer tree. It can be used as a thin veneer or built up of many layers to be further embellished by carving or inlaying. Although lacquer was used from the earliest historical period in China, the technique of carving designs into a multi-layered lacquered surface apparently did not begin until the Yüan dynasty (1279-1368). For this table, the lacquer was applied in a layer each of yellow and grayish-green, with a final thicker layer of red. By cutting through the different parts of the design to varying depths, the artisan was able to achieve coloristic effects in the ornamentation. With the exception of the table top, which for functional purposes required a plain surface, all portions of the table are elaborately carved with stylized cloud, dragon, bat and floral motifs in low relief. A virtually identical table was in the Fu-ch'en tien of the Imperial Palace in Peking.



EMBROIDERED SILK THRONE CUSHION

15.296

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Length: 146.5 cm. (57¾ in.); width: 111 cm. (43¾ in.)

Elaborately embroidered throne cushions of this type provide some indication of the richness of 18th-century palace furnishings. The oversized imperial thrones on which such cushions would have been placed were equally sumptuous. It was customary for both thrones and cushions to be decorated with auspicious symbols. Here, the embroidered motifs include five-clawed dragons, bats, clouds and peaches.



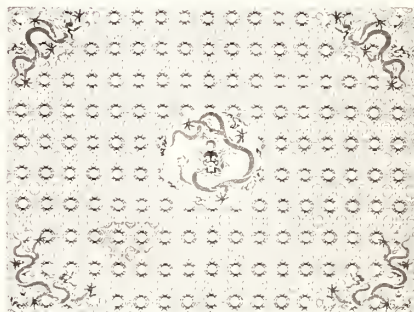
SILK THRONE CUSHION

09.396

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Length: 142 cm. (55¾ in.); width: 113 cm. (44½ in.)

Silk brocades woven for imperial use during the Ch'ien-lung period are characterized by their unusual degree of precise detail. The individual motifs woven into this throne cushion, regardless of their size, are all finely articulated. A five-clawed dragon enclosed within the central medallion is balanced by those dragons on each of the four corners. The background design is composed of the highly stylized character *shou* ("longevity").





SILK CHAIR COVERS

13.153 and 13.154

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Length: 171 cm. (67 5/16 in.); width: 57 cm. (22 7/16 in.)

Length: 174.5 cm. (68 3/4 in.); width: 56 cm. (22 1/16 in.)

On special occasions, the elegant simplicity of Chinese domestic chairs would be embellished by silken covers. Long rectangular covers of this type were folded over the yoke of the chair back and the seat cushion. The designs are arranged on the covers with that placement in mind; the leonine creatures at either end being reversed so that they will appear right-side up when in use. Other elements of the design include confronting dragons, bamboo, cranes and ornate rocks.



PHOENIX AMONG ROCKS AND FLOWERS

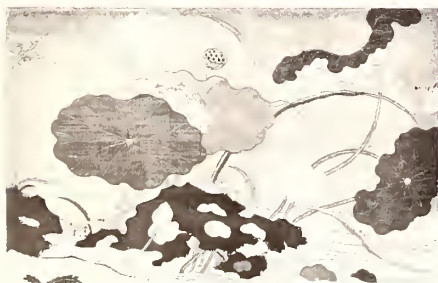
11.163s

K'o-ssu, silk tapestry

18th century

Height: 41.8 cm. (16 1/2 in.); width: 64.5 cm. (25 3/8 in.)

The term *k'o-ssu* ("cut silk") refers to a tapestry technique by which a large number of individual shuttles are used to weave various colors into a warp independent of mechanical sequence. Since the technique freed artisans from the limitations of standard weaving, they were able to compose large pictorial compositions. This *k'o-ssu* fragment, depicting a phoenix standing among peonies beside narcissus and ornate rocks, originally formed the outside cover for an album of paintings.



DRAGONFLY AND LOTUS PLANTS

11.163t

K'o-ssu, silk tapestry

18th century

Height: 41.8 cm. (16 1/2 in.); width: 64.5 cm. (25 3/8 in.)

In the top left corner, a dragonfly hovers over a large lotus leaf among ornate rocks. A rich variety of tones and colors has been effectively used to depict the individual elements of the composition. The *k'o-ssu* ("cut-silk") technique enabled weavers to produce an infinite variety of designs without any need to repeat a portion or all of the pattern. Some elaborate examples are practically indistinguishable from actual paintings. As the preceding example, this fragment originally formed the outside cover for an album of paintings.

GOLD AND TURQUOISE SCEPTER

37.45

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Length: 24 cm. (9 15/16 in.)

This *ju-i* ("as one wishes") scepter is one of a set of eighteen objects that was designed for use on the Imperial desk and presented to the Ch'ien-lung Emperor in 1783 by several Manchu officials. Covered with sumptuous gold filigree, the scepter is further embellished with turquoise insets redolent of auspicious symbols, including bats, peaches, and the Eight Buddhist emblems: the wheel of the law, conch shell, umbrella, canopy, lotus, jar, pair of fish, and mystic knot. The *ju-i* was originally an attribute of certain Buddhist personages, but by the 18th century it had become a comprehensive good-luck charm, often given as a birthday present.



CARVED RHINOCEROS HORN

70.1

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Height: 21 cm. (8 1/4 in.); width: 18.8 cm. (7 3/8 in.)

The Chinese believed that the horn of the rhinoceros possessed diverse magical powers, and for that reason, the ornamentation of such objects often alluded to Taoist themes. The carving on this horn, however, appears to depict the sorrows of parting, a theme that is echoed in the seven-character inscription on a rock near the lip of the cup: "The wine of parting has yet to be drunk, yet my heart is already shattered."



CARVED BAMBOO BRUSH-HOLDERS

39.78 and 39.79

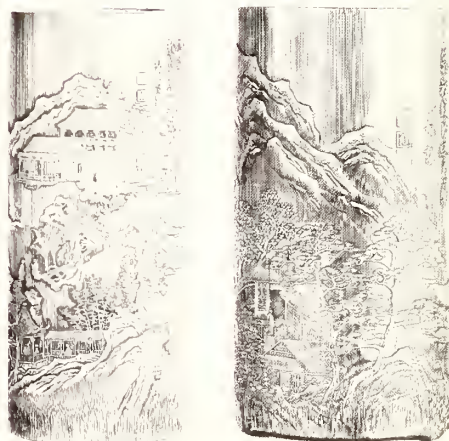
By Chang Hsi-huang

17th century

Height: 12.2 cm. (4 3/4 in.); diameter: 5.2 cm. (2 in.)

Height: 10.6 cm. (4 1/8 in.); diameter: 5.8 cm. (2 1/4 in.)

Although the tradition of carving bamboo can be traced back to the 6th century A.D., extant examples date from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and later. The carving of bamboo flourished as an art form to such an extent during the Ming that there developed several schools. The two most popular were the Chin-ling (Nanking) school which favored a broad generalized modelling of forms in simple relief, and the Chia-ting school which emphasized detail and used multiple levels to achieve a sense of depth. Chang Hsi-huang, one of the most celebrated bamboo carvers, is usually classified as an independent carver belonging to neither school, but his style at times reveals affinities with the Chia-ting school. His characteristic technique, which is alternately referred to as *lin-ch'ing yang-uen* ("retaining green on relief designs") or *p'i-tiao* ("skin carving"), utilized the greenish outer skin of the bamboo to create and enhance illusionistic effects. In these brush-holders, it appears that Chang Hsi-huang based his design on painting, perhaps by a Ming artist, but certainly evoking sentiments of T'ang dynasty themes. On both carvings, as on a painting, there are long poetic inscriptions which are signed by Chang Hsi-huang, accompanied by two of his seals.





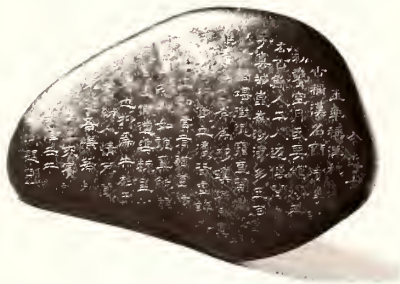
JADE URN

44.18

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Height: 25 cm. (9 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.); width: 28.3 cm. (11 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.)

The shape of this censer is derived from that of the *ting* tripod, one of the most ancient ritual vessels in China's history. The guardian animal on the cover, the dragons biting the ring handles, and the monster masks above the three legs are elements drawn from different prototypes, imparting to the urn a strong archaistic flavor which is characteristic of the art of the Ch'ing dynasty. The superb quality of the carving of the urn represents the final peak of excellence in a tradition which stretches over several thousand years to the neolithic period.



JADE PEBBLE

11.447

Carved inscription by the Ch'ien-lung Emperor, dated 1762

Height: 10 cm. (3 $\frac{15}{16}$ in.)

Jade pieces such as this example, polished from natural pebbles, were appreciated for their color and tactile quality. Ch'ien-lung expressed his appreciation for this gift by having his reactions inscribed onto the stone's surface. The formal *li-shu* ("clerical script") inscription reads in part:

"... In the K'un-lun Mountains and at Lop Nor there are quantities of jade stones, and now we have been presented with this piece of jade ... When the strings were untied and the case opened, the jade brilliantly manifested itself; cockscomb red in color and shaped like an axe. Beautiful and lustrous, it is naturally endowed with the elegance of heaven and earth. Its moist and blood-like appearance defies criticism ..."



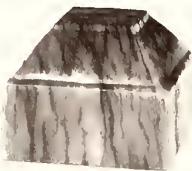
JADE SEAL

16.630

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Height: 5.6 cm. (2 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.); width: 7.7 cm. (3 in.)

Carved into the large base of this jade seal are four seal-script characters reading "Han Wu Hsiang-hou," which may be translated as "the Han dynasty Marquis of the Wu district." This refers to Chu-ko Liang (181-234), the brilliant military tactician of the Three Kingdoms period who was enfeoffed with this title shortly after 223 A. D. Chu-ko Liang, a popular folk hero, was famous for his victory over Ts'ao Ts'ao (155-220) at the battle at the Red Cliff on the Yangtze River, as well as for many other exploits. The imposing size and meticulous finish of the seal, as well as the style of the characters, indicate that it was probably carved in the Ch'ien-lung period.



ORNAMENTAL CARVING

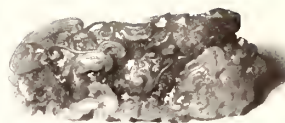
58.1

By Chou Pin

18th century

Height: 5 cm. (1 15/16 in.); width: 11.5 cm. (4 1/2 in.)

The intricate design includes a phoenix with its wings furred and long tail curving over the edge of the stone, and at the other end of the carving, two large peony blossoms with a number of intertwined leaves. The two sections of the composition are united by curvilinear strands of *ling-chih*, the sacred fungus. The two characters carved onto the flat end surface of the phoenix's tail are evidently the craftsman's name, Chou Pin, but there is no record of a lapidary by that name in the standard biographical sources. The stone, agalmatolite, is known as "Shou-shan shih" ("Eternal Mountain stone") since it is found in the neighborhood of the village of Shou-shan in Fukien province. For generations this type of stone has been highly prized by craftsmen for carving seals and small table ornaments.



GLASS BOWLS

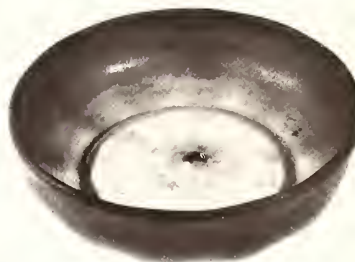
13.132 and 16.347

18th century

Height: 7.1 cm. (2 3/4 in.); diameter: 30.5 cm. (12 in.);

Height: 3.8 cm. (1 1/2 in.); diameter: 14.1 cm. (5 1/2 in.)

The bowls are formed of twelve shallow lobes and their footings are roughly applied coils. A punty mark in the center of the bases indicates that the pieces were blown. The bowls have the characteristic of being moist, or "weeping," because the glass decomposes from within due to an excess of alkaline. The entire surface of the bowls is so extensively pitted that it has become semi-opaque. Previously this type of glass was dated considerably earlier because it was believed that the worn surfaces had resulted from long burial in the earth, but studies suggest that this characteristic defect in manufacture dates from the years following 1680, when an imperial glass workshop was established in Peking.



GLASS BOWL

16.515

18th century

Height: 8.4 cm. (3 1/4 in.); diameter: 22.2 cm. (8 3/4 in.)

The ovoid body of the white glass bowl rests on a simple ring foot. The surface is crizzled and semi-transparent. A formal foliate motif is engraved on the outer surface of the bowl. Unless stored under controlled temperature and humidity, the surface will develop a dampness which is characteristic of "sweating" or "weeping" glass.





GLASS VASE

15.116

18th century

Height: 35.5 cm. (14 in.); diameter: 22.3 cm. (8¾ in.)

A series of vertical ribs run from the flaring lip over the bulbous body to the high, splayed foot, suggesting fluting. A fine crizzle covers the entire surface. Derived from ceramic prototypes, this particular shape is referred to in Chinese ceramic literature as *hai-t'ang shih*, "begonia shape." Although a number of small ceramic examples in this shape are assigned to the Sung dynasty, larger pieces, such as this white glass example, are dated to the K'ang-hsi period (1662-1722) of the Ch'ing dynasty.

TZ'U-CHOU STONEWARE PILLOW

42.21

Sung dynasty, 11th-early 12th century

Carved inscription by the Ch'ien-lung Emperor, dated 1768

Height: 12.4 cm. (4¾ in.); length: 20.9 cm. (8¼ in.); width: 12.4 cm. (4⅞ in.)

The poem by Ch'ien-lung which is carved on this white pillow can be rendered in part:

"Among ceramics, those from Ting-chou are like the fountainhead,

Whose decoration did not depend on the application of pigments . . .

In the kiln the lead-breath and fire-breath purified and engulfed it

Producing an unsullied antique appearance like that of a Taoist . . ."



Ch'ien-lung's identification of the pillow as a product of the Ting-chou kilns is a misattribution. The pillow belongs rather to the family of Tz'u-chou ware, a folk ware which did not find favor with the Sung emperors. The reddish-brown discoloration on the pillow suggests that it was probably submerged by the flooding of the Yellow River in 1108 which severely affected the Ch'ü-lu Hsien area of Hopei province.

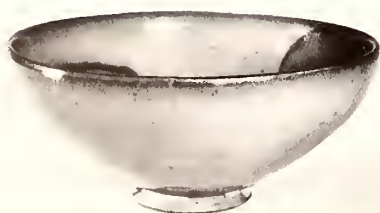
CH'ÜN WARE BOWL

02.180

Yüan dynasty (1279-1368)

Carved inscription by the Ch'ien-lung Emperor, dated 1776

Height: 8.4 cm. (3 5/16 in.); diameter: 19.5 cm. (7⅞ in.)



In 1776 the Ch'ien-lung Emperor composed the inscription that is carved onto the inside of this bowl. It records that the bowl was among a hoard of bronze and ceramic vessels that was recovered from Ili (Chinese Turkestan) after the region had been pacified and the fields brought under cultivation. Ch'ien-lung reveals his connoisseurship by noting that the bowl manifests a Yüan dynasty style, unequal to the refinement and elegance of Sung examples. Archaeology and research during the 200 years since this inscription was written have confirmed the accuracy of the Emperor's observation.

PORCELAIN BOX WITH CELADON GLAZE

55.15

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Height: 5.7 cm. (2¼ in.); length: 22.2 cm. (8¾ in.);
width: 6.7 cm. (2 9/16 in.)

Inside the box are three round and one ogival apertures with corresponding partitions, and on the exterior are molded designs including, on the cover, a dragon rising from stylized waves surrounded by curling clouds. A pale green celadon glaze covers the box, and on the center of the base is a mark of the Ch'ien-lung period written in seal script in underglaze blue. Pen boxes of this shape, derived from Islamic metalwork prototypes of the 12th century and later, were first copied in Chinese ceramics in the early Ming dynasty, and blue-and-white examples datable to the early 15th century are still extant. The present example is still close to its prototype and is decidedly different from traditional Chinese brush and ink stands. It is debatable whether it was ever intended to serve as a functional object.



PORCELAIN VASE WITH "APPLE GREEN" ENAMEL 45.3

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Height: 15.1 cm. (5 15/16 in.); diameter: 8.4 cm. (3¼ in.)

The color of this small *mei-p'ing* is a transparent emerald green enamel applied over a crackled grayish-white glaze that has the effect of softening the green and imparting a warmer tone to it. This particular combination of colors was an innovation of the K'ang-hsi period (1662-1722) and remained popular through the Ch'ien-lung era. The *mei-p'ing* shape, designed to hold a single branch of prunus, was an innovation of the Sung dynasty (960-1279), and these early examples are much larger. The small size of this example suggests that by the 18th century, *mei-p'ing* vessels, as so many others, no longer served the purpose for which they were originally intended and had become merely decorative objects.



CLUSTER OF PORCELAIN VASES WITH CELADON GLAZE

46.6

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Height: 16.5 cm. (6½ in.); diameter: 14 cm. (5½ in.)

Joined to a central vase with a taller neck are five vases with identical decor of *ju-i* lappets, lotus scrolls, and stylized lotus panels. A pale celadon glaze covers every surface but the six footrims. Vases of this eccentric type were popular in the Ch'ien-lung era, and this example has a seal-script mark of the period in underglaze blue on the base of the central vase. Ch'ing dynasty celadon made at Ching-te Chen differs from Lung-ch'üan celadon of the Sung and Yüan dynasties in being paler in color and more translucent, because the paste is a white porcelain rather than the gray stoneware of the earlier wares. The glaze also lacks the depth and glow of the earlier celadon.





PORCELAIN GARLIC-HEADED VASE WITH ENAMEL
DECORATION

54.127

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Height: 17.2 cm. (6¾ in.); diameter: 9.5 cm. (3¾ in.)

A stylized leaf motif covers the swelling below the mouth which resembles a bulb of garlic, ribbed to simulate the garlic's cloves. The vase is decorated with a delicately painted design in pale and opaque enamels of various colors over the glaze. The scene depicts a lady seated on a rock, with two children amusing themselves in a garden setting. An awareness of Western painting technique is apparent in the modelling of the faces and hands, as well as in the rendition of the lawn and shrubs in the background. This reflects the influence of such Western artists as Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766), a Jesuit who was active at the court in Peking. The composition is accompanied by a poetic couplet and several seals. The mark on the base is written in regular script with grayish-blue enamel over the glaze. Called *Ku-yüeh-hsüan* ("Ancient Moon Pavilion"), this extremely fine ware is said to have flourished from 1727 to 1754.



PORCELAIN VASE WITH ENAMEL DECORATION 38.10

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Height: 24.4 cm. (9⅝ in.); diameter: 13.2 cm. (5 3/16 in.)

A landscape painting, executed in various overglaze enamels, entirely covers this rouleau vase. Below the shoulder is a four-line poem describing the scenery and three simulated seals. The ceramic nature of the vase is negated to create an illusion of a painting. This tendency to transpose designs between different media indicates the artisan's mastery of his materials to such an extent that they no longer impose any technical restrictions on him. The Ch'ien-lung mark on the base is written in seal script in underglaze blue.

PAIR OF PORCELAIN STEM BOWLS

AND STANDS

44.13 and 44.14

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Height: 13.1 cm. (5 1/8 in.); diameter: 16.4 cm. (6 1/2 in.)

By means of a technical *tour-de-force*, the stems of the bowls are set permanently into the reticulated bases but are not attached to them, so that both parts move freely. The decorative scheme consists of four medallions with miniature landscapes reserved against a background covered with stylized lotus blossoms and a fine tracery of incised fern-like scrolls. The openwork celadon stands are in the form of five stylized elephant heads with trunks attached to a circular ring. The combination of the ruby red on the exterior, the aquamarine on the interior and the celadon of the stands achieves a garishness which is characteristic of the exuberance of the late Ch'ien-lung period.



PORCELAIN VASE WITH ENAMEL DECORATION 45.2

Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795)

Height: 20.3 cm. (8 in.); diameter: 9.6 cm. (3 3/4 in.)

Over a *café-au-lait* glaze the decoration is rendered in an array of colored enamels including blue, green, yellow, white, red, as well as gold. The decorative scheme of this vase results in a profusion of colors and motifs employed arbitrarily for their own sake rather than to achieve a harmonious design. This tendency appears to have been more of a phenomenon in the latter half of the Ch'ien-lung period. Certain motifs on this vase, such as the beadwork and the stylized lotus, lingered into the succeeding Chia-ch'ing (1796-1820) and Tao-kuang (1821-1850) periods. The Ch'ien-lung mark in seal script is written in gold over the glaze on the base.



ARTS OF THE EDO PERIOD 1615-1868

During the rise to power of the Tokugawa Shoguns, the nation's capital was moved in 1603 from ancient Kyoto to the remote village of Edo, present day Tokyo. From there the Shoguns ruled Japan throughout the prosperous era of the Edo period (1615-1868). Although a “closed door” policy had been instituted as early as 1587, Japan was not totally isolated from the arts of the rest of the world. In fact, the pervasive influence of European art is one of the unmistakable characteristics in 18th century Japan.

Artists of the Maruyama-Shijō school achieved a new sense of naturalism in their paintings by applying their own intense observations of nature and concepts gleaned from European art. In 18th century *ukiyo-e* (“painting of the floating world”) there is an increased interest with spatial settings that is particularly obvious in the “perspective paintings.” A naturalistic tendency can also be seen within the bold, abstract Rimpa school that was so firmly rooted in Japan's traditional arts.

Influences from China had a role in the culture of 18th century Japan. The ideals of Chinese literati painting found adherents among the artists of the *nanga* or *bunjinga* schools.

Despite all of those external influences, Japanese artists retained their own national identity. They selectively transformed the imported ideas and techniques to create clearly recognizable Japanese modes of expression. The rich variety of images, styles and techniques is characteristic of 18th century art in Edo Japan.

AUTUMNAL FLOWERS AND MOON

04.126

By Sakai Hōitsu (1761–1828)

Ink and color on silk

Height: 143.3 cm. (56³/₈ in.); width: 50.0 cm. (19³/₄ in.)

At about the age of forty, after experimenting in various styles, Sakai Hōitsu devoted his energies to painting in the Rimpa tradition. A distinguished and early invention of this school was the practice of dropping colors or additional ink onto wet washes of another color. The result of this technique (*tarashikomi*) was a diffused area of color with soft, blurred perimeters. The large leaves in this painting reveal how effective this technique can be when used by a sensitive artist such as Hōitsu.



THE RED CLIFF

64.11

By Ikeno Taiga (1723–1776)

Ink and color on paper

Height: 130.8 cm. (51¹/₂ in.); width: 56.8 cm. (22³/₄ in.)

Ikeno Taiga was one of the first great painters of the Nanga (Southern) painting school, a school so named because it had ideological affiliations with the Southern school of Chinese painting. The present painting illustrates the Red Cliff poems that were written by the celebrated Chinese poet Su Shih about two trips he took in 1082 to the famous landmark. The marvelous expressive elements, such as the towering cliff and swift current, capture the emotions of the poems rather than the scene itself.





YÜEH-YANG TOWER

By Ikeno Taiga (1723-1776)

Ink and color on paper

Height: 130.4 cm. (51 3/8 in.); width: 56.8 cm. (22 3/8 in.)

64.12

The Yüeh-yang tower, built during the T'ang dynasty (618-907), was immortalized by Fan Chung-yen (989-1052) after its reconstruction of 1045. Inspired by Chinese literati traditions of the Southern school, Nanga artists frequently based their paintings on famous passages of Chinese literature that described landscapes and monuments they had never seen. The use of blue wash outlines in the mountains and the emphatic slant of the lake suggest that this painting was made as a mate for "The Red Cliff" when Taiga was in his forties.



MYNAH BIRDS IN A PLUM TREE

By Yosa Buson (1716-1784), dated 1776

Ink and color on silk

Height: 106.0 cm. (41 3/4 in.); width: 43.0 cm. (16 7/8 in.)

67.18 and 67.19

Yosa Buson was one of the most famous poet-painters of the Nanga school. The Nanga school is often called the literati school of painting (*bun-jinga*), and the nurturing intellectuals valued the expression of personal inspiration above techniques or likenesses. In the present painting, dated 1776, Buson has used sharp, quick strokes to heighten the feeling of quarreling mynah birds. The mate to this painting portrays three mynah birds passively seated upon a branch gazing to the left and apparently watching the altercation.

LANDSCAPE OF THE FOUR SEASONS: SPRING

74.22

By Gyokuran (1728–1784)

Ink and color on paper

Height: 135.2 cm. (53¼ in.); width: 32 cm. (12⅝ in.)

Gyokuran may well be the most famous female painter of the Nanga school of painting. As the wife of Ikeno Taiga, she had a unique opportunity to learn from one of the greatest exponents of the tradition. This spring landscape is from a set of four paintings, depicting the four seasons, which are considered to be her finest masterpieces. In the upper right corner is an inscription by the famous artist Fukuhara Gogaku (1730–1799).



LANDSCAPE OF THE FOUR SEASONS: WINTER

74.25

By Gyokuran (1728–1784)

Ink and color on paper

Height: 135.2 cm. (53¼ in.); width: 32 cm. (12⅝ in.)

In contrast to the soft appearance of springtime, Gyokuran has depicted winter as a crystalline structure of angular shapes. The pliant willow trees of spring are here replaced by sturdy pines, and the curved mountain texture strokes have changed with the seasons into the sharp, stiff rock textures of winter. All four seasonal paintings have inscriptions by different scholars, and this painting has an inscription by Sonsai (1736–1802).





SPRING PILGRIMAGE TO HASE-DERA

44.45

By Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-1795), dated Spring 1773

Ink and color on silk

Height: 44.7 cm. (17 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.); width: 81.2 cm. (32 in.)

Located in the hillside surrounding Nara, Hase-dera has been and still is a famous objective of pilgrims. It was founded during the late 7th century and contains a venerated statue of an Eleven-headed Kannon. Maruyama Ōkyo lived in near-by Kyoto where he had a studio on Shijō (4th) street. It was the location of this studio that gave its name to the school of naturalistic painting which Ōkyo founded, the Shijō school.



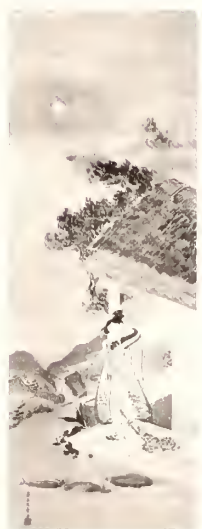
HERDBOY ON WATER-BUFFALO IN RAINSTORM 06.49

By Nagasawa Rosetsu (1754-1799)

Ink and color on silk

Height: 29.9 cm. (11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.); width: 45.5 cm. (17 $\frac{15}{16}$ in.)

The theme of a herdboy on an ox, often symbolic of the quest and attainment of enlightenment, was introduced to Japan from Southern Sung China. The style of this painting reflects the influences of Rosetsu's teacher, Maruyama Ōkyo. Although most of Rosetsu's paintings are undated, the known stylistic sequence of his painting and calligraphy suggests that this painting was executed about 1790, during a period when Rosetsu painted some of his most gentle and lyrical works.



A YOUNG WOMAN WITH A CAGE OF FIREFLIES (SUMMER MOON)

98.96

By Shiba Kōkan (1747-1818)

Signed Shōtei Harushige

Ink and color on silk

Height: 93.5 cm. (36 $\frac{13}{16}$ in.); width: 32.7 cm. (12 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

The interests of Shiba Kōkan ranged from the arts to the sciences and from Japan to Europe. When young, he worked in the *ukiyo-e* style of the famous Suzuki Harunobu. Kōkan once wrote in his journal:

[Harunobu] died suddenly when he was a little over forty and I began making illustrations of his work, carving them on woodblocks. No one recognized my prints as forgeries, and to the world I became Harunobu. But I, of course, knew I was not Harunobu, and my self-respect made me adopt the name Harushige...I painted "Summer Moon" depicting a girl dressed in thin robes through which one could see her body...I illustrated the new [side-lock hair] style, which consequently became exceedingly popular [ca. 1775]. But I feared that such work would damage my reputation and I gave it up.

COURTESANS OF THE THREE CAPITALS

98.433

By Tsukioka Settei (1710–1786), dated 1776

Ink and color on silk

Height: 105.7 cm. (41⁵/₈ in.); width: 43.5 cm. (17¹/₈ in.)

Though a popular theme in woodblock prints, the depiction of the beautiful and famous courtesans of Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka rarely occurs in painting. The beauty from Edo has her arm around the shoulder of the lady from Kyoto, and the more gorgeously dressed Osaka woman stands apart. Adding to the interest of this painting is the inscription by Settei which protests against the sad lives of the girls and the practice of prostitution as it then existed. He notes in part:

It is pitiful to think that these transient figures were once daughters of good families...The contracts for their services bind them, but for the love for their families their shame is hard to bear...From days of yore to the present, many licentious sons have become bankrupt because of their love for such women. Men of the world silently reflect on the courtesans shown in this painting.



MOONLIGHT REVELRY AT SAGAMI DOZŌ

03.54

By Kitagawa Utamaro (1754–1806)

Ink and color on paper

Height: 147 cm. (4 ft., 10 in.); width: 318.6 cm. (10 ft., 5³/₄ in.)

Kitagawa Utamaro is an acknowledged master of the *ukiyo-e* genre. Though he used a variety of subject matters, he is best known for his prints of beautiful courtesans. The technique of “perspective pictures” (*uki-e*) learned from the Dutch, first appeared in Japan around 1734. Here Utamaro has placed the magnificent courtesan just left of center with all of Tokyo Bay behind her, while the diagonal placement of attendants draws attention to the male silhouette on the left screen. Evidently, the pleasure party has yet to begin at the Sagami Dozō, a pleasure house once located in Shinagawa, southwest of Tokyo. Within this large panel, Utamaro has depicted three works by his contemporaries: the lion floor screen at right, the dragon floor screen at left, and the panel with poetry hanging above the lintel.



RYŌGOKU BRIDGE — EDO

03.217

By Utagawa Toyoharu (1735–1814)

Ink and color on silk

Height: 73.1 cm. (28³/₄ in.); width: 185.9 cm. (73³/₁₆ in.)

Toyoharu was the founder of the Utagawa school, a famous school which spanned the history of *ukiyo-e*. This rare, large *uki-e* (perspective picture) accurately depicts the panoramic view surrounding the Ryōgoku Bridge in Edo, modern day Tokyo. This major bridge spans the Sumida River, to the left can be seen the Asakusa Sensō Temple, beyond is the Azuma Bridge, and rising above the horizon is the peak of Mount Tsukuba. All levels of society are portrayed happily going about their business in a natural manner and they appear to be unaware that they have been captured by the realistic brush of this great artist.





AIRING BOOKS AND CLOTHES

05.309

By Katsukawa Shunshō (1726-1792)

Ink and color on silk

Height: 157.1 cm. (60 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.); width: 82.6 cm. (32 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

At the end of summer, it was customary to air books and clothes in order to avoid the damage caused by mildew and accompanying insects. The specific month represented by this panel is probably August.

Though Shunshō is most popularly known as a maker of bold, dramatic actor prints, paintings such as this one and its mate reveal an interest in minutia and a competence in other styles.



SEVEN WOMEN NEAR A FOOTBALL COURT

05.308

By Katsukawa Shunshō (1726-1792)

Ink and color on silk

Height: 157.7 cm. (62 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.); width: 82.8 cm. (32 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.)

The squared toed shoes and ball carried by two of the beauties signify that they are on their way to play football. Behind the fence at the left are *yamabuki* plants and at the right is a flowering cherry tree with a bird on its branch. The month represented is obviously April, suggesting that this painting and *Airing Books and Clothes* were once part of twelve panels whose theme was the twelve months. The subject of football playing and the fact that the women are of different ages infers that this painting may possibly be a parody of one of several classic themes.



PAINTER'S BOX

44.21

18th century

Lacquer with mother-of-pearl inlay

Height: 20.3 cm. (8 in.); width: 17.2 cm. (6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.);

length: 23.7 cm. (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.)

This is a fine example of mother-of-pearl inlay, a technique that the Chinese learned from India and passed onto Japan. Over 4,000 pieces of shell in the shapes of chrysanthemum flowers are sunk into a thin layer of lacquer. This painter's box (*e-bako*) is composed of two tiers, and on the larger, upper tier rests one tray with a gold lacquered rim. The break between the two tiers occurs within a row of inlaid shells.

WRITING BOX

Signed Masatsune

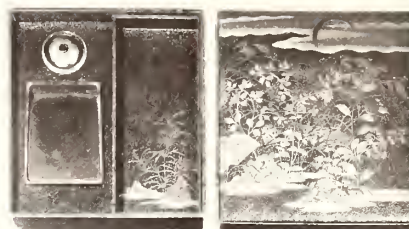
First half 18th century

Lacquer with gold and silver inlay

Height: 5 cm. (2 in.); width: 21.6 cm. (8½ in.); length: 23.7 cm.
(9 5/16 in.)

On the cover of this handsome writing box (*shuzuribako*) is a moonlit autumn scene with silver dew upon the grasses. An edge of a sleeve intrudes the scene from the left. Into the rocks of the cover design, Masatsune has incorporated characters which read “*nezame*” (awakening from sleep). The autumn moon of the ninth month is known as the moon of awakening, and we may identify this scene as an allusion to the *Yowa-no-nezame monogatari*, Tales of Awakening at Night. All surfaces of the box and two interior trays are covered with *nashiji* (pear ground) pattern — gold or silver flecks in different layers of lacquer which resemble the skin of a pear.

44.22



WRITING BOX

Early 19th century

Lacquer with gold and silver inlay

Height: 4.5 cm. (1¾ in.); width: 20.9 cm. (8¼ in.);
length: 23.0 cm. (9 1/16 in.)

On the cover, silver and gold inlay are used to depict two storks standing by plants upon an oblique ground plane of gold. The sky and exterior and interior of the box are covered with *nashiji*. Inside the cover is a relief landscape scene of gold and silver. An edge of land with flowers is continuously depicted over the two interior trays. The water dropper inside is in the shape of a *tanzaku*, a folded piece of paper. The bold, decorative designs on this box reflect the influence of Rimpa artists such as Sōtatsu and Korin.

44.25



MEDICINE CASE

By Ogawa Kyūkoku

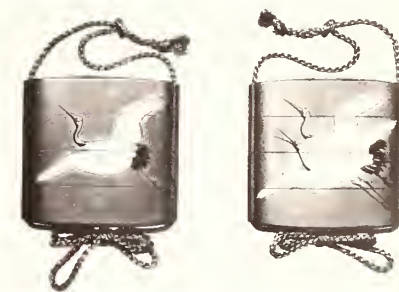
17th century

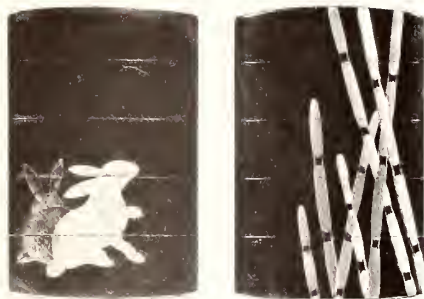
Lacquer with mother-of-pearl inlay

Height: 10.2 cm. (4 in.); width: 7.4 cm. (2 15/16 in.);
thickness: 1.6 cm. (5/8 in.)

On one side are two cranes in flight, and on the other, a single crane. The white feathers of all three cranes are made with mother-of-pearl inlay. *Nashiji* ground is used on the inside of the cases and top. *Inrō* were derived from Chinese seal boxes, and came to be used in Japan as containers for such things as medicine. Around the beginning of the 17th century, they were a necessary part of a man's attire, and would be hung with a *netsuke* and cord from the *obi* sash of a gentleman's costume.

44.31





MEDICINE CASE

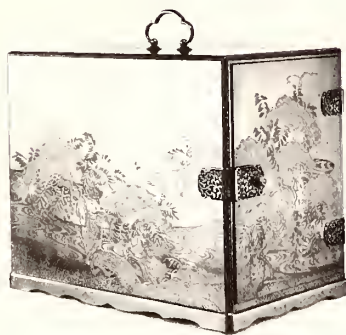
44.38

Late 18th or early 19th century

Lacquer with gold, silver and mother-of-pearl inlay

Height: 8.9 cm. (3 1/2 in.); width: 5.9 cm. (2 5/16 in.);
thickness: 1.8 cm. (11/16 in.)

This four-case *inrō* has a ground of reddish-brown lacquer. Across the three lower cases is seated an albino rabbit of silver inlay in front of a golden rabbit seen from the back. The reverse has stalks of *tokusa* made from inlaid gold, silver, and mother-of-pearl. The interior of the case is covered with red and gold lacquer, and on the bottom are written the names Koma Yasutada and Jōkasai.



CHEST OF DRAWERS

54.18

19th century

Lacquer with gold and silver inlay

Height: 20.6 cm. (8 1/8 in.); width: 16.8 cm. (6 5/8 in.);
length: 24.5 cm. (9 11/16 in.)

On the exterior of this chest of excellent quality, one master design of pine, wisteria, and stream continuously covers the four sides and top. The designs are so ordered that each individual panel contains a complete scene. On the inside of the door, a cherry tree blooms among clouds. All the trees and plants are executed in relief with gold and silver. The fronts of the three drawers are covered with designs of textile patterns, and the drawer pulls, hinges and handles of the box are made of silver. All undecorated surfaces are covered with *nashiji* ground.



INCENSE BOX

54.118

Signed Shōgyoku

18th century

Lacquer with gold and mother-of-pearl inlay

Height: 11.3 cm. (4 7/16 in.); width: 10.6 cm. (4 3/16 in.);
length: 11.3 cm. (4 7/16 in.)

Lacquer boxes such as this incense container (*kō-bako*) are representative of the most refined art of the Edo period. One continuous springtime design, complete with a hut, pheasants, cherry and pine, envelops the entire exterior of this two-tiered box. On the interior tray is a scene of four *kimono*, with textile patterns executed in mother-of-pearl inlay, hanging from a clothesline. The texture patterns of cut gold squares create a vibrant, abstract effect throughout the compositions.

NETSUKE

Late 18th century

Color on wood

Height: 11.2 cm. (4 7/16 in.); 9.2 cm. (3 5/8 in.); 11.0 cm. (4 5/16 in.)

These three *netsuke* are good examples of the type associated with the legendary carver Yoshimura Shūzan (d. 1776). Shūzan was trained as a Kanō school painter, and as a hobby he carved and painted *netsuke* of immortals and fantastic figures. One figure represents Riujiin, the Dragon King of the Sea, who grasps his tide-ruling jewel with both hands. Another figure of an immortal holds with his right hand a bowl from which a cloud and dragon emerge. The third figure, with mouth open as though shouting, grasps a toggle that is coiled about his left forearm. *Netsuke*, sometimes referred to as toggles, are fastened to the end of a cord that is attached to a small container. The *netsuke* served as a safety guard to prevent the container from slipping through the *obi* to which it was attached. The use of *netsuke* flourished during the middle of the 18th century and climaxed around the first quarter of the 19th century.



ARITA WARE BOTTLE

17th-18th century

Height: 22.4 cm. (8 7/8 in.); diameter: 12.7 cm. (5 in.)

Since the early 17th century the town of Arita has been a major center of porcelain manufacture because of its proximity to basic natural materials used in porcelain manufacture. This hexagonal vase, or *sake* bottle, with a small flaring mouth has a dark coffee brown glaze around the bottom and a white glaze running unevenly down from the top. The decoration on the shoulder and upper part consists of two predatory birds and tree branches executed with colored enamels and gilding.





ARITA WARE DISH

74.34

18th century

Height: 6.3 cm. (2½ in.); diameter: 32.0 cm. (12⅝ in.)

The dish has a slightly everted foliate rim of 12 lobe units. Inside is a single over-all design of a white stylized eagle or hawk on a ground of conventionalized cloud bands and concentric wave pattern. The central bird with head in profile is molded in relief with details drawn in underglaze blue. The edges of the cloud bands are molded in relief. Outside, in underglaze blue, four conventionalized flower and scroll motifs alternate with small curvilinear motifs. A copy of the six-character Chinese Ch'eng-hua mark is executed loosely in underglaze blue on the base.



IMARI WARE COVERED JAR

62.18

17th-18th century

Height: 14.0 cm. (5½ in.); diameter: 13.3 cm. (5¼ in.)

Arita porcelain made for export was shipped from the port of Imari about 10 km. away to the north, and since early times the name of the port has been attached to the ware. Several types of Arita porcelain have been called Imari, but, in the strictest sense, it should be reserved for the wares decorated in underglaze blue and overglaze enamel colors. Later the ware became so popular that pieces were commissioned for the Western market. In the present piece, the floral patterns, roundels, and diaper patterns are executed in underglaze blue and overglaze enamels and gold.



KAKIEMON WARE BOWL

61.29

18th century

Height: 10.1 cm. (4 in.); diameter: 21.0 cm. (8¼ in.)

The Kakiemon porcelain of Arita is prized by Western collectors for its particular refinement and elegance, and it was widely copied in European factories. Characteristic is the milk-white porcelain with lustrous glaze. The decoration is meticulously painted in low-fired overglaze enamels of jewel-like clarity. The decoration on this ten-sided bowl consists of hydrangeas and phoenixes in overglaze enamels, a raised dragon inside, and a rim edged in brown.

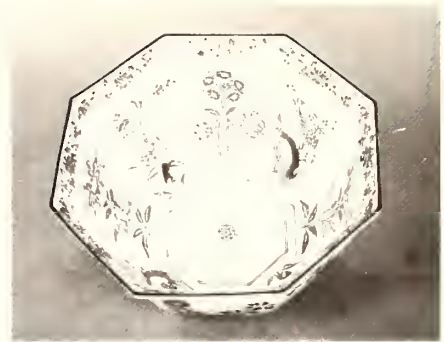
KAKIEMON WARE BOWL

63.8

18th century

Height: 10.2 cm (4 in.); diameter: 21.2 cm. (8 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

During the first half of the 17th century, potters in the Arita region began to produce porcelains decorated with colored enamels. The members of the Sakaida family, later given the name of Kakiemon, were among the leaders in the field, and toward the end of the century, their work became ever more refined in technique and artistic quality. This octagonal bowl, with slightly flaring rim and upright lip, has a design of flowers, trees, rocks and scrolling vines in underglaze blue and overglaze enamel colors. The rim is brown and on the base is a single circle in underglaze blue.



KAKIEMON WARE DISH

62.15

18th century

Height: 5.7 cm. (2 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.); diameter: 34.3 cm. (13 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

According to family tradition, Shibuemmon was the 5th generation of the Kakiemon family working in the 18th century. Wares of this period have finer, harder glazes, new shapes, and strong decorative brushwork. Some of the designs are geometrical, and the edges of the pieces are often indented. This ten-lobed dish decorated in underglaze blue, overglaze enamels, and gold is a typical example of what is considered the Shibuemmon style. The outside is decorated with blue waves and red and yellow plum blossoms. On the base is a single blue ring, and at the center is a well painted mark in underglaze blue of a radish plant.



ARTS OF THE NEAR EAST AND INDIA

During the time of the American Revolution, most of the Near East was under the control of the Ottoman Sultans (A.D. 1281-1923), who ruled from their court in Istanbul. The artistic traditions of the period reveal the continuation of the styles and techniques established in the 16th century with a gradual interest in incorporating Western elements. The decoration of manuscripts generally reveals the persistence of traditional themes, while the production of pottery shows a decline, becoming crude and provincial.

In the 18th century, Iran was ruled by several dynasties whose dates often overlapped: Safavids (1501-1732), Afsharids (1736-95), Zands (1750-94), and Kajars (1779-1924). The 18th century Safavid pottery reveals the influence of late Chinese wares, imitating both the blue-and-white wares, and the incised or pierced fine white pottery. The Kajar period is characterized by the revival of traditional themes and the impact of both East and West.

The dominance of Western style is also noticeable in the art of the Mughals of India (1526-1858). Although classical themes were still executed — such as imperial portraits, genre themes, illustrated copies of literary and scientific manuscripts — the impact of European art dominates the paintings. While the Deccani school follows the classical Mughal style, Rajput developed a highly unique tradition, illustrating the Krishna epic or scenes symbolizing Hindu themes.

ILLUMINATED HEADING

06.307

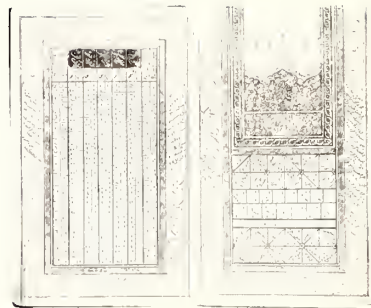
From a *Ruzname* (calendar)

Turkey, Ottoman period, dated 1807

Color and gold on paper

Height: 21.7 cm. (8 9/16 in.); width: 13.4 cm. (5 5/16 in.)

The complete book comprises ten thin pages bound in gold tooled, dark red leather. In the West, the closest equivalent to a *ruzname* would be an almanac. In the present example, "written by the humble slave Suleyman, the Wise, in 1807," the months and days are recorded with the weather. The five columns with headings written in gold on a blue ground list the daily times of prayer. The manuscript covers the years between 1807 and 1813.



UNDERGLAZE PAINTED BOTTLE

05.244

Turkey, Ottoman period, 18th-19th century

Height: 26.1 cm. (10 5/16 in.); diameter: 10.2 cm. (4 in.)

On each side of the bottle are three quatrefoil medallions, the large central one encloses a design of a bird on a branch, and the two smaller flanking medallions each contain a six-petaled flower. This rectangular bottle with a small mouth and concave bottom appears to have been decorated on its side rather than standing erect, because the birds are properly placed only if the bottle rests upon its side. This somewhat crude piece was produced in the workshops of Kutahya.



UNDERGLAZE PAINTED PLATE

70.23

Iran, Safavid period, late 17th-18th century

Height: 8.2 cm. (3 1/4 in.); diameter: 45.3 cm. (17 3/4 in.)

The beckoning female figure, who holds a wine bottle by the neck while standing in a landscape setting, is a feature seen in 17th century blue-and-white Iranian wares; the exaggerated finger of her right hand is seen in late Safavid painting. The exterior of the plate reveals eight lotus panels, decorated with floral sprays and separated by vertical units containing so-called "tassel-marks". There are six spur-marks inside the low foot-rim. This plate with everted rim is replete with stylistic and technical allusions, many of which are based on late Ming dynasty (1368-1644) Chinese wares. The technique of painting with dark blue outlines filled with varying tones of blue, and the use of incised decoration around the central painted medallion (which derives from Chinese celadons) relate this to Kirman or Meshed wares.





UNDERGLAZE PAINTED PLATE

04.151

Iran, Safavid period, 17th-18th century

Height: 6.7 cm. (2 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.); diameter: 34.0 cm. (13 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

The sketchy motives under the crazed, opaque glaze are again inspired by Chinese porcelains, specifically, a group of Wan-li (1573-1619) export wares. The stylized landscape in the central medallion has elements that recall the lotus blossom, rock, concentric wave, and water-chestnut motives on late Chinese blue-and-white. In the 17th and 18th century wares, often attributed to Kirman, the figures are usually 'Chinese' types. The shaven-headed, long-robed figures in the present example appear to be Buddhist monks.



BOTTLE WITH INCISED DECORATION

03.196

Iran, Safavid period, late 17th-18th century

Height: 25.3 cm. (10 in.); diameter: 14.4 cm. (5 11/16 in.)

As early as the Seljuk period, during the 12th century, potters began imitating the white porcelains from Sung dynasty China (960-1279). The later Chinese technique of archaistic design, *an-hua* ("hidden decor"), is here duplicated under the transparent glaze. The almost vitrified, tall-necked vase with globular body is an example of the renewed interest in white Chinese ceramics that occurred during the Safavid period. The provenance of these white wares is still undecided, although at times they are attributed to Nayin near Isfahan.



VASE WITH INCISED DECORATION

03.4

Iran, Safavid period, late 17th-18th century

Height: 10.8 cm. (4 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.); diameter: 11.6 cm. (4 9/16 in.)

The fine-grained white paste of this vase is almost vitrified and its thin walls are fairly translucent. Like the preceding example, the paste and technique of the decor reveal a Chinese inspiration. Extant examples of 15th and 16th century Chinese wares in the Near East indicate that prototypes were available to the Iranian potters. Although the technique of the Iranian examples is based on Far Eastern models, their shapes, however, follow an indigenous tradition.

UNDERGLAZE PAINTED BOWL WITH
PIERCED DECORATION

03.6

Iran, Safavid period, 18th century

Height: 5.8 cm. (2 5/16 in.); diameter: 18.2 cm. (7 3/16 in.)

There are both Seljuk (12th century) and contemporary Chinese examples of pierced white wares with “rice-grain patterns,” so named because of the size of the perforations. Although it is often difficult to determine which tradition was more influential in ceramics from the Safavid period, the precursor of this bowl seems to be Iranian. Pierced and underglazed painted white ware is often termed “Gombroon” ware, since a great quantity was exported from the port of Gombroon, now Bender Abbas, on the Persian Gulf.



DAGGER AND SHEATH

39.44

Made for Lutf Ali Khan

Iran, Zand period, ca. 1790

Gold inlay on iron

Length: 37.2 cm. (14 5/8 in.)

On the sheath and handle are gold inlaid arabesque motives. The double-edged steel blade with salient ribs is undecorated, and on the pommel is a cracked garnet set in silver. The relief inscriptions include verses from the Koran and the dedication which reads:

“In the time of the rule of the Zand king... worthy of the Khan of the world, Lutf Ali... a small dagger (*khanjari*) made in Shirāz... a just king... a liberal ruler... a prince and ruler of sea and land.”

Lutf Ali Khan (1789-96), who ruled in Shirāz, was the last king of the Zand dynasty and “the last chivalrous figure among the kings of Persia.”



PORTRAIT OF A PRINCESS

07.591

Iran, Kajar period, 19th century

Color and gold on paper

Height: 12.7 cm. (5 in.); width: 10.1 cm. (4 in.)

The name of the subject of this delicate painting is inscribed on the mounting as Tuti Bigum, Princess of Iran. The arabesque border resembles an actual frame, thus giving the impression of an enframed locket-sized portrait. A medallion on the painted vase of the Kajar period included in the exhibition (accession number 08.166) reveals a similarity in composition.





UNDERGLAZE PAINTED PILGRIM BOTTLE

03.3

Iran, Kajar period, 18th-19th century

Height: 15.0 cm. (5 7/8 in.); diameter: 12.0 cm. (4 3/4 in.)

The shape of this pilgrim flask is based on a precursor of great antiquity. The shape was widely influential, and extant examples in various media were made in all the countries of the Orient. The Freer Gallery has an impressive 15th century Chinese blue-and-white example, yet it is difficult to determine whether the inspiration for the present flask was an imported object or a 13th century prototype of Syrian metalwork. The washed effect of the blue, resulting from the application of the clear glaze over the insufficiently dried pigments, creates a handsome appearance.



UNDERGLAZE PAINTED VASE

08.166

Iran, Kajar period, 18th-19th century

Height: 12.8 cm. (5 1/16 in.); diameter: 15.4 cm. (6 1/16 in.)

A thick turquoise glaze covers the interior of the vessel, and on the exterior the glaze stops short of the slightly flaring foot-rim. Within the medallions that encircle the body are four scenes of a bird on a branch alternating with bust portraits of women. The idea of enframed frontal portraits of this style can also be seen in paintings of the period.



UNDERGLAZE PAINTED BOWL

08.132

Iran, Kajar period, 19th century

Height: 13.2 cm. (5 3/16 in.); diameter: 32.7 cm. (12 7/8 in.)

The eclectic and archaistic features of this bowl, which combines the two separate traditions of Iran and the Far East, are typical of the Kajar period. The ancient theme of a rider holding a bird, one of the most popular motives in early Iranian art, is reemployed here with the rider depicted in the Kajar style, with a pointed hat, pinched-in waist and large dark eyes. The exterior decoration of highly stylized pagodas on this large bowl with flaring sides is based on 16th and 17th century Iranian imitations of late Ming dynasty blue-and-white wares.

VESSEL WITH ENAMELED DECORATION

07.158

Iran(?), 19th century

Height: 10.9 cm. (4 5/16 in.); diameter: 11.3 cm. (4 7/16 in.)

The shape, decor and physical qualities of this octagonal tripod suggest a Chinese provenance. Since many pieces were made in China for the indigenous Muslim population as well as for export, it is not uncommon to find Chinese wares decorated with Arabic inscriptions. However, the length and style of the inscriptions on the present piece reveal an Islamic calligrapher. The writing was not contemporary with the manufacture of the object, so it is possible that this vase is the end result of two artisans from different times and places. Perhaps a prized import was embellished by a native Iranian calligrapher.



VIRGIN MARY AND THE MIRACLE OF CHANGING WATER INTO WINE

68.10

India, Mughal school, 18th century

Color and gold on paper

Height: 23.2 cm. (9 1/8 in.); width: 15.0 cm. (5 7/8 in.)

In 1580, during the reign of Akbar, who was the son of Humayun (see accession number 07.206), the first Christian mission arrived at the Mughal court. The mission stayed for three years, and others soon followed. Illuminated manuscripts and engravings by such masters as Albrecht Dürer were known to the 16th century court artists, and the influences upon Mughal art, whether in subject matter or in the use of modelling, are apparent in many of the miniatures.



LOVERS ON A TERRACE

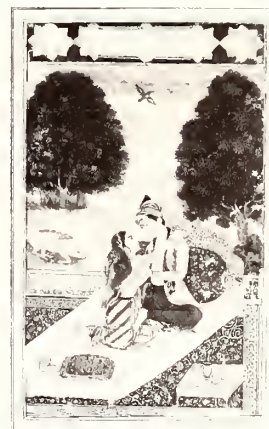
07.582

India, Mughal school, late 18th century

Color and gold on paper

Height: 16.0 cm. (6 5/16 in.); width: 9.5 cm. (3 3/4 in.)

The Mughal dynasty was founded by Babur, a descendent of Genghis Khan, who came from Ferghana. His son, Humayun (see accession number 07.206) is recorded to have brought Persian artists to India in the 16th century. Yet it was Akbar, the third ruler, who was responsible for creating the syncretic atmosphere for the merger of Iranian influence with the native Indian miniature style which resulted in this distinctive school of painting. The themes are often those of love, bordering on the erotic, which are usually set in sumptuous or royal surroundings with utilitarian objects scattered about. These objects, more often than not, are charged with symbolic meaning, reinforcing the central theme of the painting.





LOVERS ON A TERRACE

07.232

India, Mughal school, 18th century

Color and gold on paper

Height: 27.5 cm. (10 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.); width: 18.1 cm. (7 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.)

The two lovers in this idealistic setting are being entertained by three female musicians. The darkened sky, crescent moon, and foreground candelabra indicate that it is night. The motif of a terrace with railing overlooking a river bank was a popular one for Mughal artists of the 18th century. The syncretic tendencies of this school can be seen in the European approach to depth which is apparent in the handling of the far bank.



ANCESTRAL GROUP OF MUGHAL RULERS

07.629

Signed by Govardhan

India, Mughal school, 18th century

Color and gold on paper

Height: 29.85 cm. (11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.); width: 20.25 cm. (7 $\frac{15}{16}$ in.)

These six gentlemen are stationed in the elegant environment indicative of their aristocratic lineage. Ancestral groupings are a traditional subject of Mughal painting and it is the modelling used in the faces which indicates a late period, suggesting that this is an 18th century rendering of a 17th century subject. The artist's name appears in gold between the double posts of the canopy on the right.



BATTLE BETWEEN THE IRANIANS AND THE TURANIANS

68.4

From the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi

India, Mughal school, 18th century

Color and gold on paper

Height: 38.5 cm. (15 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.); width: 25.4 cm. (10 in.)

This miniature illustrates a theme from the *Shahnameh*, or the Book of Kings, an epic poem on the history of Iran written by Firdausi around 1000 A.D. On the right, Rustam is depicted defeating the Turanians, who are led by Afrasiyab. The poem describes Rustam:

"Grasped in his hand he bore an ox-head mace,
And seemed a dromedary broken loose.
He came forth from the center like a wolf,
And scattered all the foemen's vast array.
Then horsemen's heads were shed as leaves are shed
Before the blast, and fortune left the Turkmans."

ALEXANDER ENTHRONED

07.277

From the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi

India, Mughal school, late 18th century

Color and gold on paper

Height: 33.7 cm. (13¼ in.); width: 21.6 cm. (8½ in.)

The Persian text is written in *nastalīq* upon 602 paper folios. Four of the pages are illuminated, and this is one of the nineteen miniatures that are included in the manuscript. This double page miniature in late Mughal style is from the second and last part of the book, folios 387 *verso* and 388 *recto*.



ILLUMINATED HEADING

07.625

From the *Ajaib al-Makhlukat* of al-Kazwini

India, Mughal school, dated 1789

Length: 25.1 cm. (9⅞ in.); width: 15.5 cm. (6⅛ in.)

The text that follows this frontispiece contains 525 folios and 272 illustrations in color and occasional gold. This cosmology, the title of which may be translated as the Marvels of Creation, was originally written in Arabic by al-Kazwini in 1276. The Freer book is a copy of a Persian translation. The first part deals with heavenly things, and the last part is concerned with terrestrial matters.



PORTRAIT OF A PRINCE AND HIS WIFE

07.617

India, Mughal school, 19th century

Color and gold on paper

Height: 26.6 cm. (10½ in.); width: 18.6 cm. (7 5/16 in.)

The rather straight-forward portrait depicts a royal couple, complete with the family dog. It is understandably less erotic than paintings of lovers' rendezvous. The surrounding European style architecture adds an exotic atmosphere to this domestic scene. The technique of chiaroscuro used in the faces also reflects European influence.





SEATED RULER WITH ATTENDANTS

68.7

India, Deccani school, late 18th century

Color and gold on paper

Height: 18.0 cm. (7 1/8 in.); width: 18.0 cm. (7 1/8 in.)

The Deccani school, like the Mughal school with which it is closely associated, began in the 16th century, and moved to decline with the defeat of the last Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan in the last quarter of the 17th century. During the end of this tradition, an interest in rich detail is often a predominant characteristic. An attendant with a white cloth is fanning the seated ruler who is savoring the fragrance of a rose.



LACQUER PENBOX

59.5

By Rahim Deccani

India, Deccani school, mid-17th century

Height: 5.3 cm. (2 1/8 in.); length: 28.2 cm. (11 1/8 in.);

width: 4.9 cm. (1 15/16 in.)

Around the sides of this lacquer penbox (*kalamdan*) are floral designs which have an almost cloisonné-like appearance against a rust-brown background. The scene on the cover with an amorous prince and his lover contains the signature of "Rahim of the Deccan." Inside the cover are three scenes: a gentleman being waited upon in a garden, lovers with attendants, and a non-figural landscape. A smooth layer of black lacquer covers the inside of the box.

There is a mixture of styles apparent in the painting which is noticeable in another signed work by Rahim depicting a figure in mid-17th century European dress. Such details reflect a fascination with the exotic that existed at the Indian courts equal to that of their European counterparts.



GIRL WITH ANTELOPE

37.42

India, Rajput school, ca. 1770

Color on paper

Height: 21.1 cm. (8 5/16 in.); width: 14.9 cm. (5 7/8 in.)

The composition of the painting and the high-waisted fashion of the woman indicate a Jammu provenance during the reign of Raja Ranjit Dev (1735-81). The present illustration depicts love in separation (*viraha*) as opposed to that of union (*samyoga*). The pain of separation is often dispersed by the love-sick women by playing with or feeding certain animals: symbols of the departed lover. As in Kangra painting, a major influence on Jammu miniatures, the theme is here expressed by a beauty playing with a black buck.

KRISHNA WITH THE GOPIS

68.6

India, Rajput school, 18th century

Color and gold on paper

Height: 26.0 cm. (10¼ in.); width: 20.0 cm. (7⅞ in.)

Krishna, perhaps the most popular folk deity in India, is an avatar or incarnation of Vishnu, and was accordingly a very popular subject for artists of the Rajput school of painting. As deity or savior, he was often portrayed with *gopis* (cowherds), who symbolize the soul of man. Illustrations of Krishna with the *gopis* or with Radha, his lover, can usually be interpreted on numerous symbolic levels; but they generally stress the passionate devotional relationship of souls to God.



KRISHNA WITH THE FLUTE

30.83

India, Rajput school, ca. 1790-1800

Color and gold on paper

Height: 20.9 cm. (8¼ in.); length: 23.0 cm. (9 1/16 in.)

This miniature illustrates an episode from the *Ras Lila* which has been translated as: "...on a clear autumn night, Krishna remembers that he has promised the milkmaids (or cowherds) to dance with them, and so goes into the forest and plays upon his flute." The painting is said to have come from Mandi, a state in the Himalayan foothills that was under Rajput rule until 1806, and therefore would be a work of the Kangra school.



MAIDENS SEARCHING FOR KRISHNA

30.84

India, Rajput school, ca. 1780-90

Color and gold on paper

Height: 22.4 cm. (8 13/16 in.); length: 30.5 cm. (12 in.)

The subject illustrated is another episode in the *Ras Lila*. After the *gopis* (cowherds) have prepared themselves, and the music for dance has begun, "they without discrimination conceive that Krishna is now subject to their charms and think of him as their lord in a literal and moral sense. He therefore abandons them.... They search for him everywhere, inquiring of every tree and creeper, beast and bird, if they have seen him." It is the gestures of the *gopis* that reveal their emotions as they search in vain for Krishna. Krishna, symbolized by the moon, has not exactly abandoned them, for he is embracing them all within his light.





KRISHNA HOLDING THE HILL GOVARDHANA

32.12

India, Rajput school, ca. 1780-90

Color on paper

Height: 25.3 cm. (10 in.); width: 17.1 cm. (6 ¾ in.)

This painting portrays the consequences of one of Krishna's many pranks. When the villagers were about to worship Indra, Krishna persuaded them to worship the mountain as a symbol of the world from which they earned their livelihood. As they began to worship it, Krishna manifested himself on the summit and thus became the object of their worship. Indra, depicted here on his vehicle, an elephant, was furious and unleashed the rains upon the villagers, whereupon Krishna lifted the mountain to protect from the rain all those who had worshipped him. Once attributed to Mola Ram, the famous artist of Garwhal, this painting is now considered to be a fine example of Rajput painting from Garwhal in the 1780's.



DRESSING THE BRIDE

32.11

India, Rajput school, ca. 1800

Color and gold on paper

Height: 17.6 cm. (6 15/16 in.); width: 14.7 cm. (5 13/16 in.)

The scene depicts a Hindi verse by Mati Ram, and the poem inscribed on the covering sheet is quoted below:

"Mati Ram says that at the time of the
consummation of her marriage, a host of comrades
gathered round their friend.

And overmuch her dearest gossip would be teasing her,
the while she set a golden jewel on her feet.

'Wear this,' she said, 'and may it ever tinkle in thy
husband's ears!'

Whereas the bride held up her hand as though to strike
her with a weapon, but in her agitation struck
no blow."

The drawing is exquisitely conceived with brilliant, delicate colors, but the somewhat dry technique belies its 19th century date.

TOMB OF EMPEROR HUMAYUN AT DELHI

07.206

India, Mughal school, 19th century

Color on paper

Height: 22.8 cm. (9 in.); width: 40.8 cm. (16 1/16 in.)

Born in 1508, Humayun ascended the throne in 1530 after the death of his father, the founder of the Mughal dynasty. In 1540 Humayun was decisively defeated and exiled until he managed to regain control in 1555. Death came on January 24, 1556, when descending the staircase of his library at Delhi, he “stumbled out of life as he had stumbled through it.” His tomb, built during Akbar’s reign by Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, the architect employed by his widow, is a fine example of Timurid influence; and it heralded a new tradition in architecture in northern India.



THE TAJ MAHAL

07.214

India, Mughal school, 19th century

Color on paper

Height: 21.1 cm. (8 5/16 in.); width: 31.1 cm. (12 1/4 in.)

This world famous white marble tomb built by Shah Jahan (1628-1658) in memory of his wife, known as Mumtaz Mahal (“the ornament of the palace,” 1592-1631), rises 187 feet above the Jumna River at Agra, India. The domed roof reminds one of the advances made in Humayun’s tomb (see accession number 07.206), and the simple, harmonious plan heralds a high-point of the classic imperial style. The Shah had planned for himself a black marble structure on the opposite bank of the river, but the political intrigues of his son thwarted those plans.



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